

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER VARIABLE IN RESEARCH : ONE
DEFINITION IS NOT ENOUGH

by

STEPHANIE C. DEBOSSU

B.A., University of California Riverside, 1993

M.A. University Northern Colorado, 2005

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fullfillment of the Requirements for the
Doctorate of Education.

School of Education and Human Development

In Graduate Studies

University of Colorado Denver

August 2015

Contents

Executive Summary	3
CHAPTER ONE	
Statement of problem	4
Multiple English Language Learners	5
The Adaptive Latino Label	6
Basis for Accurate Representation	7
The English Language Learner as Defined in Policies	8
Literature Review	9
Second Language Acquisition	11
Complexity of the Current Testing Practices	12
Assessment Accommodation Policies	13
Classification and Reclassification	14
Research Design	15
Methodology	15
Frame Analysis	16
Frames	17
Data Sources	17
CHAPTER TWO	
Findings	19
The Students	21
The Parents	22
The Accommodations	23
The Writing Style	26
CHAPTER THREE	
Implications and Recommendations	29
Conclusions	33
References	36

Executive Summary

Properly defining a population ensures that resources, such as funding and access, meet the needs, expectations, and intended outcomes for those represented. Ethical concerns arise when a target population, such as the English Language Learner population, is defined in numerous yet incomplete ways, and differently in research and in state policies (Solórzano, 2008). Defining populations of students in K-12 schools impacts the inclusion and exclusion of students in assessments and can become a method to manipulate systems and outcomes based on test scores (Katz, Low, Stack & Tsang, 2004). Test scores turn into data, feeding research and policies. These policies drive development and revision of academic programs and tests, educating and preparing a population of students who follow and take these programs and tests. The resulting revisions generate new data that lead to continual adjustments. This cycle of tests, data, and revision is only as useful as the targeted population definition itself. With multiple definitions, each set of data and its resulting programs and assessments need to include a detailed description of the population the data set represents.

For a certain population of students, such as for English Language Learners (ELL), or English Language Acquisition (ELA) students, results are aggregated under one label, regardless of the language, or languages, these students have learned prior to English, or to their pattern of language acquisition, e.g., consistent, interrupted, and of differing quality, creating one definition representing many (Solórzano, 2008). Definitions are meant to accurately describe and should have only one meaning across multiple contexts. Multiple definitions of one population only confuse, mislead, or conceal.

This qualitative study examined how the English Language Learner is framed in two Colorado state statutes, the Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act) and the English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA), and in two assessment program policies, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs), the language proficiency test adopted through the WIDA consortium, of which Colorado is a member. These findings are then compared to the existing research on how an ELL learns and uses a new language, displaying linguistic acquisition. The following emerged as key elements framing the ELL student population:

- the students are described as multifaceted yet are assessed as homogenous.
- the parents are valued and expected to participate in their child's English language development while facing linguistic difficulties in doing so.
- the accommodations are computer-embedded and derived from a universal design borrowed from accommodations for cognitive and or physical disabilities.
- the language of the statutes is progressively obscure and can be misleading.

This monograph consists of three major parts: 1) A synopsis which includes the problem definition, the literature review, the policies and assessment programs review, and the study methods; 2) the findings, and 3) the implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

Statement of Problem

A English Language learner (ELL), English Language Acquisition (ELA), or Low English Proficiency (LEP) as currently defined by the U.S. Department of Education (2004), is a classification, a subgroup, not a demographic group, representing a variety of students learning English as a second or additional language for academic gains, based on one trait, English language proficiency (U.S.D.E., 2004). This trait defines a group of students for the purpose of language and content assessments. Defining all non-native English speakers as a subgroup is akin to grouping students according to gender or some other broad trait. This is potentially problematic, as it gives no relevant details as to who these students are outside of this particular generic label, such as their grade or their strengths and weaknesses in language or in content. At issue is the cohesiveness of the ELL population, its degree of comparability at testing time and consequently in data reports (Katz, et al., 2004), and the distribution of resources those data reports inform.

This group of students is heterogeneous, with different language, life, and cultural experiences, unique language acquisition history, and varying linguistic and academic competencies (Katz, et al., 2004). There is no consistent and reliable way to measure the academic readiness of each ELL student. This uncertainty calls into question the meaningfulness of a broad definition and consequently the validity of the reported data. Further uncertainty concerns whether the specific ELL population is to be tested in English, both language skills and/or subject-content, when their instruction or knowledge of that content, and of language and literacy, is not necessarily entirely in English. For

The English Language Learner Variable

accuracy in testing results, content knowledge should be tested in the language it was learned (Almond et al., 2008; Kieffer et al., 2008).

Multiple English Language Learners

According to the Migration Policy Institute (2011), the English Language Learner population in the United States is by majority (73.1%) from Spanish speaking countries, followed by Chinese at 3.8%, Vietnamese at 2.7%, French/Haitian Creole at 2.1%, Hindi and related languages at 1.8%, Korean and German each at 1.5%, Arabic at 1.2 %, Russian and Miao/Hmong each at 1.1%, and other languages representing 10.1 %. In Colorado, Spanish is the home language of 86.7% of the school age ELL population. The state of Colorado defines an ELL as:

- A student who speaks a language other than English and does not comprehend or speak English; or
- A student who comprehends or speaks some English, but whose predominant comprehension or speech is in a language other than English; or
- A student who comprehends or speaks English and one or more other languages and whose dominant language is difficult to determine, if the student's English language development and comprehension is:
 - At or below district mean or below the mean or equivalent on a nationally standardized test; or
 - Below the acceptable proficiency level English language proficiency test approved by the department (Colorado Department of Education, 2013).

This definition does not take into account years of English instruction. Rather, it classifies an English Language learner as either not knowing English at all, with very limited English comprehension, or equal mastery of English and another or other languages, and scoring below a state or federal standardized test point, or level set by the CDE. A learner so described can be born in this country or not, from a migratory environment or not. He or she may be able to successfully participate in class but may not be proficient enough in English to pass an English state assessment, in language and content. A definition such as

The English Language Learner Variable

that of Colorado cannot be assumed to be accurate when the only common variable for a diverse group of learners is perceived proficiency in English. For example, there is no distinct classification for being an English Language learner, one who uses several languages to help bridge linguistically based instructional gaps, versus a monolingual learner acquiring a second language. The metalinguistic understanding of language patterns associated with truly bilingual or English Language learners is a skill not recognized on monolingual standardized tests.

The Adaptive Latino Label

Any definition can be updated, and when speaking of a renewed definition, one can look at the Latino label and its evolution in representation, with or without increased benefits. Census data was first gathered in 1930 on Mexicans, the term used to define anyone who was born, or whose parents were born, in Mexico (Cohn, 2010). The latest 2010 definition has many more specifics and subcategories:

Hispanics or Latinos are those people who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the Census 2010 questionnaire -"Mexican," "Puerto Rican", or "Cuban"-as well as those who indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin." People who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed on the questionnaire but indicate that they are "another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin" are those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic. The terms "Hispanic", "Latino", and "Spanish" are used interchangeably.

Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race. Thus, the percent Hispanic should not be added to percentages for racial categories. (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013).

Broadening the Latino label is the realization that there are populations that may appear to be similar, due to the commonality of a Spanish base in their language, but who

The English Language Learner Variable

are quite distinct due to their origins and race. Unfortunately, the current Census questionnaire allows for five different Latino ethnic origins, but fails to recognize that this is more than an origin. There are fifteen racial choices on the census with not one fitting a person who claims a Latino background (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). Such a person has to choose an ethnic origin, not a race.

The need for improvement in terminology and identity choices has been heard, as evidenced in changes to the census, but the targeted Latino community does not seem to have been consulted in how they want to be defined. According to a Pew Hispanic Center poll, most prefer the term “Latino”, a more unifying term (Retta, 2007). The term “Hispanic” has a negative connotation associated with the Spanish conquest of the natives, or as a United States government term (Retta, 2007). The political subjectivity of the Latino label is representative of the issue faced by the English Language learner student population. Although Latino is preferred over Hispanic, the latter is still used in federal and state programs and documents. How the English Language Learner population is defined reflects a potentially similar and incomplete progress. One could question who is best served by how a group is defined.

Basis for Accurate Representation

Between 2000 and 2010, the population of the United States increased by 27.3 million, according to the 2010 Census briefs (Ennis, et al, 2011). The Latino population accounted for 15.2 million, or for more than half of the overall increase, with effects on resources and access. How a variable is defined affects multiple related decisions, from social representation and programs, to redistricting and voting. For example, in 2011, with the release of the 2010 census data, unprecedented growth was reported in the state

The English Language Learner Variable

of Texas with minority groups accounting for 89% of the increase (Sauter, 2012). This population boom led to four additional congressional seats and to redistricting.

These additional seats upset the political scene held by Republicans, and triggered discussions and debates over who is represented under a label (Sauter, 2012). Although the growth and creation of four additional seats was due in great part to the increase of the Latino population, Republicans did not want to recognize this population as homogeneous and grant them opportunities for social and political representation, based on the belief that minority populations tend to vote for Democrats and that representation should be only for citizens. In the end only one Latino opportunity district was added. The debate over what defines the Latino population was changed from representing all to representing a fraction. How a variable is defined matters; leaving a definition so broad so as to be manipulated to favor those already in control only replicates privileges.

The English Language Learner as Defined in Policies

An English Language learner is currently defined under the classification of students with low English language proficiencies (U.S.D.E., 2004). This lack of detail as to their academic and social experience leaves the definition open to adjustment. Much of this flexibility is due to the requirement, under the NCLB Act of 2001, for school accountability and student progress reports (Katz, et al., 2004). Given that the English Language learner population changes every year, as students reach certain English language benchmarks, schools can modify their definition to match their current English Language learner enrollment (U.S.D.E., 2004). Schools may not have enough students within this population to accurately gauge achievements, hurting the school's overall

The English Language Learner Variable

progress and proficiency rating; hence the option for schools to minimize their English Language learner population, and not report their scores (U.S.D.E., 2004).

The ELL student population is used or hidden when convenient, with little regard to the fact that these are children in our educational care (Katz, Low, Stack & Tsang, 2004; Solórzano, 2008). An indistinct label is necessary so as to achieve this. Colorado school districts receive \$492 (Great Education Colorado, 2015) per English Language student in addition to the average per-pupil funding of \$6, 474 (Chalkbeat, 2015). A flexible definition could allow for more funding as a school can potentially increase its English Language learner population with a less restricting definition. As seen in the state of Colorado definition of an ELL, a student's English language proficiency can range from no English to being bilingual, depending on a chosen measure, such as a district, state, or national, mean or level (CDE, 2013).

Literature Review

Many theories and factors contribute to and reveal the importance of individual characteristics and environment on first and additional language acquisition, and the complexity of the current testing practices, which vary across states and differ in linguistic accommodations. Known factors are native language proficiency and emotional integration of language, as in linking language to experience. A constant and consistent learning environment provides grounds for explicit and implicit learning, and acquisition of language use associated with expressions and events. Individual characteristics play a role in how one perceives what he or she is learning, its relevance and application, and as part of an individual's identity.

The English Language Learner Variable

English Language learners face many challenges in schools and the classroom, with acculturation, heterogeneous linguistic environments, risk-taking, and failures (Dewaele, 2002; Dörnyei, 2009; Meisel, 2011). Being in a new environment requires understanding and potential adoption of the unknown culture. Communicating in different languages depending on the audience doesn't allow for a single linguistic and cultural reinforcement of words, grammar, expressions, and concepts. With mixed linguistic levels comes a need for risk-taking with the willingness to try to use a new language, regardless of how it will be received. This is not necessarily comfortable for all. Language adoption and integration can reshape one's identity (Batstone, 2010; Dewaele, 2002; Ellis, 2009), potentially creating an emotional gap. ELLs need to adjust to a new educational system (Genesee, 2002; Griffin, Smith & Martin, 2003; Huszti, Fábián & Komári, 2009; Johnson, 2004; Pinter, 2011), with initial language level recognition and classification (Abedi, 2002, 2004, 2008; Keiffer et al., 2008). Depending on several factors, an ELL student will receive testing accommodations for content assessments (Cawton et al., 2013; Rivera et al., 2006; Young, et al., 2006). Finally, students will be reclassified as non-ELLs and will potentially graduate (Abedi, 2002, 2004, 2008; Kieffer et al., 2008). The English Language Learner population is quite complex and diverse. This complexity warrants careful and constant monitoring and modification as students progress during their academic experience. Practices and applications should keep concurrent with the diversity found within the English Language student population, and should be reflected in the definition used to identify groups regrouping many different types of learners.

Second Language Acquisition

Not all students successfully learn a second or subsequent language, nor are they competent in all aspects of their first language (Alexiou, 2009; Batstone, 2010; Dörnyei, 2005; Lightbown & Spada, 2004; Li & Solano-Flores, 2008). The ease of learning a language is similar be it a first, second, or subsequent one, as in how well a student masters one or several components of a language, developing different levels of skill in the four modes of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. If reading comes easy in a learner's first language, this disposition is likely to be present in subsequent languages. One's personality may as well aid or hamper progress, with risk-taking a vital component of language growth, exposing the learner to new environments and linguistic applications. A shy student may not dare use an unpracticed language, leaving him or her with less feedback and reinforcement of progress. Within all circumstances, language is built along with content knowledge, both implicit and explicit, encouraged, processed, and internalized, through interactions and exchanges, as language is memorized through association and participation. A learner's language acquisition is a process of language use and application, and of adoption and integration of, and identification with the language and its linked culture. This interdependent learning system is equally important when expressing knowledge, with repeated activities and familiar environments triggering memory and application. For English Language learners, where content is learned through two or more languages, it is often best expressed though those languages, as seen in code switching, using two or more languages in unison. An assessment allowing for the languages of acquisition to be used in expressing knowledge would be a

The English Language Learner Variable

more accurate measure of a student's content proficiency. This would separate content testing from English language proficiency testing.

Complexities of Current Testing Practices

Forty-two out of the fifty states have formed four regional consortia and use their associated assessment systems, along with different state specific tests, as a response to the Federal Title III requirement that English Language learners be tested on their English language skills (Bunch, 2011; Escamilla, et al., 2003; Solano-Flores, 2008). These four consortia and their assessment systems are: World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) and ACCESS for ELLs, Accountability Works (AW) and Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA), Limited English Proficiency State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (LEP SCASS) and English Language Development Assessment (ELDA), and Mountain West Assessment Consortium (MWAC) and Mountain West Assessment (MWA) (Bunch, 2011). Each consortia and state has its own testing times, methods, items, and interpretation, for proficiency progress and levels (Bunch, 2011, Solano-Flores, 2008). This results in many differences culminating into one national and state portrait of ELLs' academic achievements and progress towards English proficiency. The various assessments are taken on varying days throughout the year, and the methods used are different in test item, format, and administration. Student responses are scored and evaluated using multiple systems. These differences are not necessarily disclosed when the results are used and integrated into one overall state or national report. This variety of measures creates and presents a multi-faceted yet homogeneous population (Bunch, 2011, Solano-Flores, 2008).

Assessment Accommodation Policies

Accommodations are intended to allow all English Language students, regardless of language or abilities, to be included and accounted for in high-stakes assessment programs (Almond, P., Lehr, C., Thurlow, M., & Quenemoen, R., 2002). The most common language accommodations available are: test translation, item modification through language simplification, oral presentation, and the use of glossaries. Through the use of language accommodation, more students are included and participate in assessments, and are being recognized in school accountability (Almond et al., 2002). The impact of high stakes testing and accommodation are two-fold, influencing school reform by taking into account progress reports from all student populations, and possibly lowering a school's yearly progress report by including all students such as lower scoring ELLs (Almond et al., 2002).

The implementation of language accommodations for English Language Learners is having positive and negative consequences on policies and student populations (Almond, 2002; Lee, 2008; Wright, 2010), with variations as to the type of accommodations and their description (Cawton et al., 2013; Rivera et al. 2006; Wright, 2010; Young et al., 2008), raising questions as to their suitability and effectiveness (Cawton et al., 2013; Rivera et al., 2006). With the exception of glossaries, current language accommodations overall are not bettering the opportunities for English Language learners to be assessed on content knowledge separately from English language proficiency. However without these accommodations, English Language learner students will be tested almost purely on language proficiency and not on content knowledge (Rivera et al., 2006; Young et al., 2008), or not tested at all (Almond et al., 2002; Wright,

The English Language Learner Variable

2010). A glossary would help them look up what a word means so as to render the content test item understandable, hence an ELL student will respond to the prompt per what is being asked and not on how the question is understood.

Classification and Reclassification

A student is classified an English Language Learner if their home language is assessed to be one other than, or in conjunction with, English. Once a student reaches a state specified English language proficiency level, he or she is moved to the next level until an ultimate level is reached; he or she is then reclassified as a non-English Language learner and transferred into regular classes, along with the general school population, per NCLB's Title I and Title III provisions (Abedi, 2002, 2004, 2008; Keiffer et al., 2008). However, these provisions are at conflict with each other, following different and overlapping policies guiding ELL education and proficiency benchmarks (Abedi, 2002, 2004, 2008; Keiffer et al., 2008). A student may be retained in one school because of his or her English Language proficiency level, where as in a different school, a similar student will be moved on to the next level given his or her length of attendance. This could results in students being artificially promoted per an administrative timeline rather than solely per proficiency tests, leading to an incomplete acquisition of language levels, gaps, and loss of progress (Abedi, 2002, 2004, 2008; Kieffer et al., 2008).

English language proficiency is individual to each student, varying in areas of linguistic strength and content knowledge. Each student's progress report needs to reflect this variation. Without individual distinction regarding how each student reaches the non-ELL classification, once placed into mainstream grade-level classes, English Language students are no longer tracked and supported, often failing to continue the same rate of

The English Language Learner Variable

progress in language, and consequently in grade-level material. This has led many more ELL students to drop out of school, unable to demonstrate their knowledge through the current testing programs and available language accommodations (Almond et al., 2008; Kieffer et al., 2008). Grouping students together based on different types of attributes gives little relevance to who is being portrayed and tested. ELL students are similar in terms of their English language proficiency yet different in every other way. Those differences need to be identified and stated so as to give relevance to the data, as reflected in the following research design.

Research Design

For the purpose of this research, I analyzed two Colorado state statutes, Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act) and English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA), and two assessment programs, Partnerships for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and ACCESS for ELLs. This study was designed to assess the definitions and frames, in state laws and statewide assessment programs, used to classify English Language students and to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the English Language Learner population conceptualized and framed in Colorado state statutes READ Act and ELPA and in two assessment programs policies, PARCC and ACCESS for ELLs?
2. Do the conceptualizations and framing of English Language Learners in the two assessment programs and two state statutes acknowledge and relate to what we know about this population based on empirical research?

Methodology

This study used frame analysis (Goffman, 1974) as a method of data analysis within

The English Language Learner Variable

a qualitative research approach (Mahoney, 2009). Frame analysis leads to a better understanding of what limits surround the conceptualization of the English Language Learner population through the allowances and restrictions written within each statute and assessment policy. How an individual or a group views and expresses experiences, how they are defined, explained, and appreciated, through words, are important as it frames current and guides future experiences, and contributes to current and future perceptions of a concept or situation (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). In policies and assessments, the ELL population is represented as having one common background. However, these students are different from one another in terms of their experiences and ultimately of their perception of self.

Frame Analysis

Frame analysis is the process of defining and gauging the impact of limitations on a concept and of what is to be understood and accepted by a greater audience. It focuses on “what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will *not* be discussed” (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p. 52). The message in a document will come across differently given what is mentioned, how it is mentioned, to what it is linked and from what it has been detached, and from what has been omitted in the writing.

Subjective and objective information infiltrate a perceived understanding, encouraged by what is or not mentioned, and drawing on a common fund of familiar experiences (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). “Cartoons, comics, novels, the cinema, and especially the legitimate stage” all involve a biased reporting and presentation of interests, citing classics as a foundation to explicate what is deemed important (Goffman, 1974, p. 15). Using classics as a reference can give more credibility to an argument; familiar to most,

The English Language Learner Variable

they are generally accepted and believed to emanate from some type of truth or proof.

The ELL population's generalized description is unquestioned as it is presented from presumably trusted authorities.

Frames

Frames are a reference, rather than a theory, a method of categorizing perspectives, a “sense-assembly procedure” helping make sense of cultural experiences (Watson, 1999, p. 146). Frames are a part of discourse, a common interpretation that helps understand information as one thing rather than another, creating the parameters used to talk about things, and changing over time, by circumstance, use, and need (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). For instance, adding a positive qualifier to the language describing a notion will leave the recipient with a sense of trust or benefit (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). This is useful when wanting to convince an audience to accept something new or different. The same is true with the opposite. Through every change, use, and associations, made to the language, the understanding of that notion changes and so do all interactions with which it is associated (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). Leaving the ELL definition as one generalization representing many will keep this population from being recognized for whom it represents, and consequently ill-served.

Data Sources

The READ Act and ELPA, two legislative statutes, give English Language Learners more relevance in aggregated academic statistics by drawing attention to their linguistic needs. PARCC and ACCESS for ELLs are two assessment program policies and their assessments reflecting these legislative bills in terms of accommodations and parent involvement.

The English Language Learner Variable

READ Act. The Colorado Legislature passed the Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act), House Bill 12-1238, which took effect July 1, 2012, with revisions in July 2013. Its focus is on literacy development in grades K through 3, for students identified with significant reading deficiencies. Intervention strategies, known as READ plans, are required and implemented with specific components outlined in the READ Act. Funding is provided through the Early Literacy Fund. \$33 million is allocated during the 2014-2015 school year, up from \$15 million in 2013-2014. English Language Learners are commonly identified with significant reading deficiencies due to their low English language proficiencies.

ELPA. The Colorado Governor signed into law a re-enacted English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA), House Bill 14-1298, on May 21, 2014. ELPA provides funding and technical support to district and school language support programs for all students whose dominant language is not English. The per-pupil funding for the 2014-15 school year is \$6, 121. ELPA guidelines are used by educators charged with classifying ELLs as they enter public schools and throughout their academic elementary and secondary career.

PARCC. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) is an alliance of 12 active board states, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia. Pennsylvania is a participating state, interested in the consortium but not using its common assessments. PARCC members develop and use summative assessments and common policies regarding accommodations, participation, and support, for all students to ultimately achieve Common Core State Standards. These tools are designed to provide guidance towards

The English Language Learner Variable

college and career readiness by the end of high school. Common Core State Standards include reading and language proficiency, a concern for all students, including ELLs.

ACCESS for ELLs. Started in 2003 through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) first administered their English language proficiency test, ACCESS for ELLs, in 2005. In partnership with the ASSETS Consortium, WIDA will begin administering an online assessment, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, during the 2015-16 school year. The paper version, ACCESS for ELLs, will still be available for schools lacking the technology to administer an online assessment or when necessary. ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, will be aligned with the Common Core State Standards. The WIDA Consortium now comprises 34 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the N. Mariana Islands.

Data Analysis

The READ Act, ELPA, PARCC, and ACCESS for ELLs were analyzed using a protocol, a set of questions, which revealed the frames conceptualizing the English Language Learner population. The repetition of these frames throughout the documents validated their relevance in defining this group of students. This emerging understanding was supported by comparing what is known, through research, about these learners to what is being portrayed.

CHAPTER TWO

Findings

Findings for this study are explained in two sections in accordance with the two research questions. This first section will address *How is the English Language Learner*

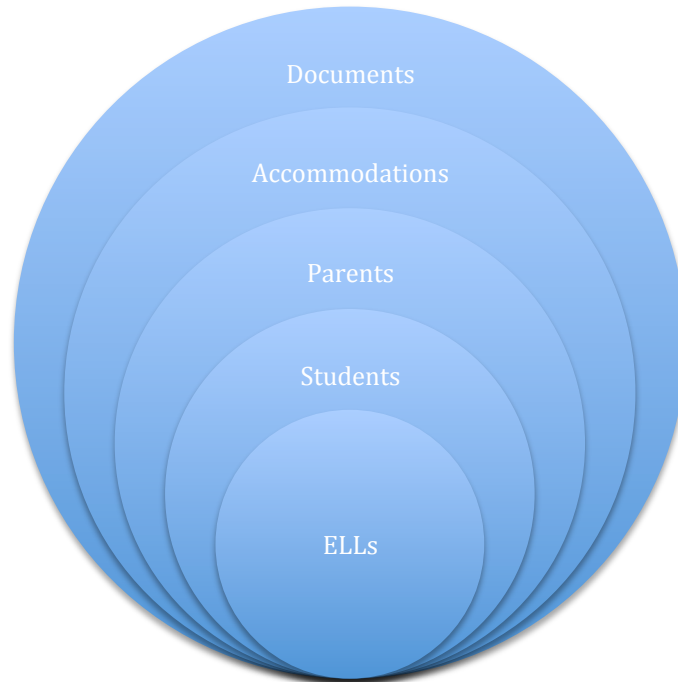
The English Language Learner Variable

population conceptualized and framed in Colorado state statutes and assessment program policies?

Within the two state statutes and policies, the English Language Learner population is conceptualized and framed within four aspects: the students, the parents, the assessments, and the writing style of the documents. The students are recognized for having linguistic richness and academic gaps, varied learning experiences, and diversity, yet, through choice of words, are reduced to one homogeneous group. Parents are acknowledged for their relevance in a child's language development, and are expected to participate and communicate with their child's school, however, they are left to deal with documents they may not understand. Testing accommodations are few and potentially unhelpful, borrowed from and or termed for Special Needs students. There is a progressive obscurity in the documents, through layout and wording, possibly misleading the reader with contradictions and difficulties in understanding and interpretation. Overall, although precise these documents are open to interpretation. Many terms are left undefined, although common in use, such as *eligible*. Leaving them without a working definition enhances a flexibility that can include as much as exclude individuals. To illustrate the layout of the information, I am stating the pages on which facts are found, as this shows the progressive change in discourse found in the reading of the documents.

Table 1. The English Language Learner Frames

The English Language Learner is defined through four frames; descriptions of the student population, parental involvement, available accommodations, and document writing style.



The Students

English Language Learners are recognized throughout the documents as heterogeneous learners with diverse languages, cultures, and academic backgrounds and experiences, but are portrayed in definitions as homogeneous, with similar and common histories. As stated in ELPA (2014), § 22-24-103, p. 12, they are speakers of one or more languages other than English, with none to some understanding of English, in § 22-24-104, p. 14. Yet, Spanish is the only mentioned optional language of a recommended reading assessment, in §22-24-108, p. 20. This sole alternative renders irrelevant a paragraph in § 22-7-409, p. 23, three pages later, stipulating that state reading, writing, mathematics, and science, assessments may be administered in *languages* other than English.

Similarly, the ASSETS documentation recognizes varying linguistic proficiency and cultural diversity as integral parts of the English Language Learner population, and is so stated in the WIDA glossary definition:

The English Language Learner Variable

Linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade level content in English (Glossary, 2011).

This is further supported on page 5 of ASSETS (2012) where it is stated that the standards used “capture an evolving understanding of the needs of ELs”. This is summarized on page 16 with “ It cannot be assumed that ELs share a common home and community sociocultural context”, further relating that the socio-cultural context of the English Language learner is stated to be diverse, with unique social and academic content knowledge, home language, prior educational and cross-cultural experiences, and opportunities for learning English. Yet, all this diversity is reduced to a nondescript “typical” academic school context and “shared sociocultural context for English language use” underlying the assessments (ASSETS, 2012, p. 16). This shifts from diverse to shared background allows all students, regardless of experiences and languages, to be viewed as one homogeneous group.

The Parents

Parents are mentioned early on in the statutes, READ Act and ELPA, and both policies, PARCC and ACCESS for ELLs, have sections addressing their needed and encouraged involvement in areas such as help with homework and communication with school. The READ Act (2012) recognizes the value of the home environments, in § 22-7-1202, p. 2, by stating that the relationship between a parent and a child is important as the parent helps the child develop a “rich linguistic experience”. However this linguistic richness is not valued to the extent of requiring schools, or educational agencies, to communicate orally and in writing in a language the parents will understand. Switching

The English Language Learner Variable

to a language understood by the parents will be done only if *practical* (the READ Act, 2012, § 22-7-1202, p. 3).

Parents are expected and encouraged to share responsibilities and to support their child's English language skills development by communicating with the school, participating in meetings, and helping implement language improvement plans at home. In the READ Act (2012), educators will meet, if possible, with parents to communicate and discuss a READ plan. Parents will then receive a written explanation and, to the extent practical, will have the opportunity to communicate with the school in a language the parents understand (READ Act, on page 6, in § 22-7-1205). Although a meeting is possible, written communication is the main means of conveying important information. In paragraph VI of § 22-7-1205 of the READ Act (2012), parents are strongly encouraged to help implement their child's READ plan through written strategies suggested by educators. In § 22-7-1207, dealing with a student's advancement, parents will receive a written notice describing the decision to advance or retain a student depending on whether he or she is assessed with a significant reading deficiency. This insistence on written communication between the school and the parents is underlined by twice stating the word "written" in one sentence: "A *written* copy of the READ plan with a clear, *written* explanation [...]" (The READ Act, 2012, p. 10). If a student is classified as ELL, chances are that his or her parents are as well, rendering written communication ineffective if not useless. The parents will not be able to read and understand the message and participate fully in their child's education as recommended by the school.

The Accommodations

Accommodations are intended to reduce and/or eliminate the effects of a student's low language proficiency level, lessening the linguistic load necessary to access content on high stakes assessments (PARCC, 2013). Many assessments are now being computer generated, seemingly reducing accommodations and leaving only limited embedded ones: pop-up visuals, auditory enhancements, spell-check, and a non-specified bilingual glossary (ACCESS, 2014). One additional accommodation is a translated assessment version in Spanish, available if a student is able to read in Spanish. This accommodation excludes students of other languages as no linguistic alternatives are mentioned. There is a potential lack of understanding of the English Language learner in the ASSETS (2012) accommodation document where English Language learners are grouped under the heading of "Accommodations for Students with Disabilities". ACCESS for ELLs lists standard features that might lessen the need for accommodations "not only for ELLs in general, but for many students with special needs" (ACCESS, 2014, p. 12).

The switch from paper and person to computers has streamlined the process and the conceptualization of the students being tested. There seems to be an assumption from test makers and administrators that English Language students, with diverse academic experiences and socio-economical home environments, will be comfortable, first, with technology and, second, with taking a computer generated writing and speaking test (ASSETS, 2012). However, to ensure all can be included in the testing, a paper version will be given for those unable to use a computer, or for schools unable to support such infrastructure. No specifics are stated as to how the embedded accommodations will be

The English Language Learner Variable

made available, or how results from paper tests will be adjusted so as to be comparable to those generated from interactive computers assessments.

Throughout ACCESS for ELLs and PARCC, there is little definition of key terms, leaving much to the interpretation to administrators, in regard to students and accommodations. All *eligible*, term undefined, ELLs are stated to be included in PARCC accessibility, with appropriate accommodations and meaningful assessments reflecting what students know and can do (PARCC, 2014). With no definition of *eligible*, accommodations may be subjective and not appropriately chosen.

Glossaries

Glossaries are recognized as one of the most helpful accommodations, however these are available only for intermediate and advanced level English language proficiency students. Glossaries are not available for beginners although it is stated in the same paragraph that they have very limited proficiency in reading, writing, and listening skills, and the greatest need for accommodations (ASSETS, 2012). This exclusion is not explained. It is not specified if glossaries are paper or computer-generated (ASSETS (2012).

Spell-check

The spell-check feature enables English speakers to have no spelling mistakes, masking potential language issues. This is an issue for ELLs as well, their true writing level is masked as well, with scores reflecting a program assisted writing sample, not their own which would show their varied strength and weaknesses in spelling, and possibly grammar.

The English Language Learner Variable

English Only Instructions

English Language Learners are not equal in their academic experience or in their English proficiency level. However, to ensure equal treatment, all assessment instructions will be in writing and English, discounting the diversity acknowledged earlier that is found within this community and the statement that all instruction in English could lead to a possible misunderstanding and “may confuse test takers, particularly young ones or those with low English proficiency” (ASSETS, 2012, p. 16). ELLs come with varied levels of understanding and interpreting language. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences leave test items open to interpretation. Their responses to questions may not be on task as having all instructions in English focuses on the language and not on the content of the assessment, if content driven. ELLs have a diverse and unique socio-cultural background, with needs that are different from those exposed to a consistent educational and social environment. This is recognized within the documents and is also stated in the PARCC accommodations manual, where it is stipulated that accommodations address the unique socio-cultural needs of an English learner. However the embedded accommodations, pop-up visuals, auditory enhancements, spell-check, glossaries, and a Spanish test version, only address linguistic needs (PARCC, 2013, March 2014).

The Writing Style

The level of the language register found in the statutes is meant for English speakers with a more than basic level of education and higher reading skills. In the READ Act and ELPA, what is written in the first pages can widely differ from what is stated in the later ones. At first mention, the references to parents and the child’s home

The English Language Learner Variable

environment are clear and welcoming, stating richness, diversity, and inclusiveness of all students, less so further into the documents. Both the READ Act and ELPA are increasingly obscure in language and references. The difficulty in reading these statutes comes from how they are constructed rather than from the complexity of the subject matter. As described in “Reading Statutes and Bills” (Texas Legislative Council, 2013, p. 2), “long complex sentences, numerous cross-references, dependent subdivisions, and phrases that except application of the statute can make the meaning difficult to follow.”

This next section will address the second research questions, *Do the conceptualizations and framing of English Language Learners in the two assessment programs and two state statutes validate and relate to what we know about this population based on empirical research?*

Empirical research shows the English Language Learner population to be diverse, coming from differing socio-economic, cultural, educational, and linguistic backgrounds. Individuals learn primary and subsequent languages at different speeds and through the following different approaches. Analytic learning is through doing, phonetic learning is the ability to repeat, distinguish, and recall words, and memory skills ensure encoding, recall, and recognition, of linguistic information. All are accomplished with varying strengths and weaknesses in the differing language modes and in different contexts (Alexiou, 2009; Johnson, 2004; Lightbown & Spada, 2004; Solano-Flores & Li, 2008). The Colorado state definition of an English Language learner is devoid of such distinctions, focusing solely on English language proficiency. Current assessment practices lack opportunities for English Language speakers to use individual linguistic skills and cultural background when demonstrating knowledge, a key element in

The English Language Learner Variable

language acquisition (Crawford, 2004). The PARCC (2013) accommodations manual stipulates that accommodations address the unique socio-cultural needs of an ELL but only offer linguistic ones. Colorado's consortium-based assessment program ACCESS for ELLs' field tested accommodations included clarification in a student's native language (ACCESS for ELLs, 2014). Yet the final program has a limited variety of accommodations and none that address the social and or emotional complexities of the ELL student. The restriction of glossaries, the best available accommodation, negatively impacts beginners and does not allow for an accurate gauge of content knowledge.

Aptitude for language is neither language nor age specific, and is linked to general cognitive skills (Alexiou, 2009; Batstone, 2010). Aptitude tests show that there is an average 25% variation between students in similar academic tasks (Dörnyei, 2005). A second language learner will be exposed to a less stable linguistic environment and to unknown situational complexities (Dewaele, 2002; Dörnyei, 2009; Meisel, 2011). In such an environment, individuals may use their new language skills less, favoring communication with those with similar linguistic backgrounds (Dewaele, 2002; Dörnyei, 2009). With less practice and exposure to new situations, the fluency and production of the new language will be hampered, contributing negatively to a learner's willingness to communicate, self-perceived competence, and self-confidence (Dewaele, 2002). English Language learners have a diverse and unique socio-cultural background, with needs that are different from those exposed to a consistent educational and social environment. The computer-generated assessments do not take into account the lack of computer familiarity found in lower socio-economical backgrounds. With the PARCC assessments' intent to ensure that all students benefit from its structure and demonstrate their knowledge,

The English Language Learner Variable

ensuring they understand instructions is a key feature, however an English only restriction may present a first and unnecessary frustrating hurdle.

CHAPTER THREE

Implications and Recommendations

Clear communication is crucial so that all stakeholders, in any given context, may be heard and taken into account when programs are developed and implemented. This is essential for all to be included and for the intended outcome to be effective. Schools and districts are no exception, from superintendent, administration, faculty, and staff, to students, parents, and the public at large. The two Colorado state statutes, the READ Act and ELPA, and the two assessment program policies, PARCC and ACCESS for ELLs, are four of the means by which the stakeholders communicate and understand their responsibilities and expectations, creating assessment program policies supported by legislative documents wanting to bridge the achievement gap. These documents need to be carefully devised and worded as the process of sharing information on such a wide platform can be hindered when language is contradictory and or obscure.

The two state statutes, READ Act and ELPA, acknowledge the diversity found within the English Language Learner population, a reflection of the recent rise in awareness in regard to this student group, due to their increased attendance in public schools across the nation, and inclusion in school progress reports. With disaggregated school report cards, each distinct student population's achievements are separate and visible. The statutes outline various aspects that are particular to the ELLs, as in being linguistically and cross-culturally diverse, using unique social and academic content knowledge, and having a varied level of proficiency in English. These stated traits are

The English Language Learner Variable

replicated within the two assessment program policies, coupled with a technological modernization. The programs have produced computerized assessments that are shared in regional consortia, a step giving any state the opportunity to benefit from educational research and design by adopting widely supported development even if unable to fully participate in the production process. Computer embedded accommodations are available for students in need of linguistic support, of which are part English Language Learners and English language natives with special needs.

Whereas the two state statutes, READ Act, ELPA, and the two assessment program policies, PARCC and ACCESS for ELLs, are rich in theory revealing the diversity and needs found within the English Language Learner population, the transfer to practice may not be as rich as resources are limited; assessments and accommodations are being designed to meet multiple student populations sharing similar linguistic needs for different reasons, such as ELL and Special Needs. Language proficiency is linked to cognitive skills in addition to difficulties arising from a transfer from one linguistic, cultural, and social, environment to another. With many terms left undefined in the READ Act, ELPA, PARCC, and ACCESS for ELLs, as seen with *eligible*, the statutes and the assessment program policies have a flexibility that makes them applicable to many students and in the process indistinct and untargeted. The decision to have instructions in English ensures this broader use, available to English language natives and non-natives alike. However this discounts low English proficiency and young students still required to being tested, although they were previously recognized as easily confused by all instructions in English. A student could potentially not answer a question due to not understanding the directions, resulting in skewed reports, conceivably jeopardizing

The English Language Learner Variable

the validity of the test itself. Stating the possible difficulties a low proficiency or young student may encounter when being tested with a specific assessment yet still testing them with that tool could be construed as contradictory. It questions the purpose of research if it is not applied when finalizing assessments programs and accommodations.

The ELL population in Colorado is, at over 86%, primarily Spanish speaking, which allows for a Spanish version of content proficiency assessments. Although Spanish speakers constitute the majority of English Language Learners in Colorado, the practice of testing in Spanish discounts students who do not speak Spanish as their native language, yet need to be acknowledged and assessed for an effective learning plan and outcome. Although a beneficial option, using a Spanish language assessment only minimally maximizes opportunities for Spanish speakers to use individual linguistic skills and cultural background when demonstrating knowledge. What is currently available does not meet their varied instructional and assessment needs, adding to the overall lack of attention paid to English Language Learners as a whole.

Equally noticeable is the lack of stipulated accommodations addressing the diverse and unique socio-cultural backgrounds of ELLs, as recognized and stated within the READ Act and ELPA. This is an overstatement as none of the accommodations listed in the manual are designed to meet those needs, only linguistic ones (PARCC, March 2014). However reassuring such a statement is, it is misleading if unfulfilled.

The move to computer-generated assessments leaves program embedded ones such as visual pop-ups, auditory enhancements, spell-check, and glossaries. Each student is assigned to a computer with access to embedded accommodations. This system of one computer per student with a self-contained assessment with accompanying

The English Language Learner Variable

accommodations creates a testing mechanism requiring less interaction between a student and an administrator. Replacing human interaction with computer assisted testing has reduced the need for trained administrators, a “burden” at testing time as stated in ASSETS (2015, p. 5). This streamlining assumes that English Language learners coming from lower socio-economical backgrounds will have had a consistent and up to date experience with technology to the extent necessary to be at ease with testing and computers at once. If testing is viewed as a burden, it raises the possible implication that student performance and results are part of a bureaucratic requirement rather than a tool in the shared interest of the academic and personal advancement of students in the care of an educational institution.

Both the READ Act and ELPA have sections addressing the needed and encouraged involvement of parents with homework and communication with school, with an outlined approach guiding the inclusion of parents, with detailed steps and types of communication. There is an insistence that communication be in writing and in English. Other languages will be available if practical, pointing to a shortcoming in understanding the difficulties this may present to a newly immigrant family dealing with language barriers. With insistence that communication be mostly in writing and in English, this assumes that all parents are able to read an official school document in the English language and understand its meaning. If a child is an English Language Learner, chances are high that his or her parents are as well, rendering these tasks difficult if in writing and in English. No hurdles should interfere with communication if construed as important.

The difficulties found within the format and writing of the statutes are troublesome as these are publicly available documents outlining the roles of educational

The English Language Learner Variable

agencies and parents. The first few pages are welcoming and understanding of linguistic diversity while further reading reduces this diversity to one variable devoid of differences. The juxtaposition of the same characteristic being valued and irrelevant within a few pages is disconcerting and can be confusing to a parent or student looking for affirmation: one could easily not understand if a child is an asset or a problem.

Conclusions

New directions begin with first attempts. Embracing technology and updating assessment program policies will require revisions. This research exposes many positive elements found within the two state statutes, READ Act and ELPA, and the two program policies, ACCESS for ELLs and PARCC. The acknowledgement of linguistic and cultural diversity found with the English Language Learner population has set the ground for further revisions to the ELL definition. As with modifications to the Latino label, these can take time. It is important to recognize that there is a renewed understanding of this vastly differing yet similar population. Without more precise definitions and targeted resources, the task of being prepared for so many different types of learners in one classroom can be akin to not being prepared at all, as limited resources would not benefit the socio-cultural differences in addition to the linguistic variations. These students are diverse, not homogeneous.

Shared English language and subject content proficiency assessments across states elevates the educational standards for more students while common resources will reduce financial strains on educational institutions. The ACCESS for ELLs consortia guarantees a minimum level of awareness and accommodations. But testing should not be limited to a similarity of design. Keeping accommodations to those available only through

The English Language Learner Variable

computer programming removes readiness and perhaps willingness to use other successful accommodations such as glossaries. These are not costly items and would further equality among all students. There is a need to continue seeking useful accommodations, ones that reflect the different social, cultural, educational, and linguistic backgrounds. Accommodations are to bring all students to a similar starting line. A computer program is a tool to this end, not the end in itself. A similar awareness and openness to revision is needed as well for school interaction with parents. Ensuring communication is open to all at all times will further their valuable involvement. Computer technology and online access to translating programs can help involve parents, English speaking or not. Routing communication can be made available in written or oral form for those able to access a computer and Internet connection. These can as well be made available over the phone and sent home with students. Further individualized communication will take more creativity, however letting a parent clearly know that they need to check-in with school administration can be done through pre-recorded or pre-written messages.

Caution should be taken when creating a definition open to so many learners and one so flexible as to serve an educational agency rather than the students. Caution should be taken with English Language Learners and special needs students using the same assessments. Incorporating an updated definition of the ELL within policy and assessment documents is not sufficient if more meaningful definitions are then diluted by accommodations untailored to the disadvantages brought on by unstable learning environments and socio-cultural influences. My hope is that the CDE will continue to research and expose the particular needs of the ELL student population, incorporating

The English Language Learner Variable

these findings into our state statutes. Granted, not all combinations of linguistic experiences and socio-cultural influences can be labeled. Again I turn to technology to group main traits and provide individualized resources. Students could self-identify through various options how they see themselves as learners. These options, in multiple languages, could range from the type of cultural backgrounds they have, which and how well they know their native languages or languages and English, and other warranted information guiding a placement into a subgroup. Technology allows for all languages to be understood and present. Content assessments need not be restricted by language. With many states participating in consortia, each could develop programs based on their most common languages, providing a network of linguistically diverse assessments. More accurate definitions representing the diversity found within the English Language learner community will result in an increasingly just and disaggregated measure of abilities and gaps. The ultimate goal of assessment programs and policies is to better the educational outcome for all students. Understanding where students are in the process of learning helps design the tools necessary for their success. The first step in doing so is proper labeling. The constant updating of the READ Act, ELPA, ACCESS for ELLs, and PARCC, will lead Colorado to a better representation of all student populations, regardless of English language proficiency, enabling a diverse and stronger future.

References

- Abedi, J. (2002). Standardized Achievement Tests and English Language Learners: Psychometrics Issues, *Educational Assessment*, 8:3, 231-257.
doi:10.1207/S15326977EA0803_02
- Abedi, J. (2004). The No Child Left behind Act and English Language Learners: Assessment and Accountability Issues. *Educational Researcher*, 33:1, pp. 4-14.
Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3699838>
- Abedi, J. (2008). Classification System for English Language Learners: Issues and Recommendations. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 27:3, 17–31.
doi: 10.1111/j.1745-3992.2008.00125.x
- Alexiou, T. (2009). Young learner's cognitive skills and their role in foreign language vocabulary learning. In Nikolov, M. (Ed.). *Early learning of modern foreign languages: Processes and outcomes* (pp. 46-61). Bristol: English Language Matters
- Almond, P., Lehr, C., Thurlow, M., & Quenemoen, R. (2002). Participation in large-scale state assessment and accountability systems. In Tindal, G. & Haladyna, T. (Ed.), *Large-scale assessment programs for all students* (pp. 341-370). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Altheide, D. & Schneider, C. (2013). *Qualitative Media Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Batstone, R. (2010). *Sociocognitive perspectives on language use and language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bunch, M. (2011). Testing English language learners under No Child Left Behind.

Language Testing, 28:3, 323–341. doi: 10.1177/0265532211404186

Cawton, S., Leppo, R., Carr, T. & Kopriva, R. (2013). Toward accessible assessments:

The promises and limitations of test item adaptations for students with disabilities and English language learners. *Educational Assessment*, 18:2, 73-98.

doi:10.1080/10627197.2013.789294

Chalkbeat Colorado (2015). School funding. Retrieved from

<http://co.chalkbeat.org/topic-school-funding/>

Colorado Department of Education (2013, June). English Language Proficiency Act.

Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tiii/elpa.asp>

Cohn, D. (2010). Race and the Census: The "Negro" Controversy. The Pew Institute.

Retrieved from <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/01/21/race-and-the-census-the-“negro”-controversy/>

Crawford, J. (2004). No child left behind: Misguided approach to school accountability

for English language learners. Retrieved from <http://users.rcn.com/crawj/langpol/>

Crawford_NCLB_Misguided_Approach_for_ELLs.pdf

Dewaele, J-M. (2002). Individual differences in l2 fluency: The effect of neurological

correllates. In Cook, V. (Ed.), *Portraits of the l2 user* (pp. 171-19). [Adobe

Digital Editions version]. Retrieved from <http://www.English Language-matters.com>

Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The psychology of the language learner: Individual differences in*

second language acquisition. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dörnyei, Z. (2009). Individual differences: Interplay of learner characteristics and

learning environment. In Ellis, N. & Larsen-Freeman, D. (Eds.). *Language as a*

The English Language Learner Variable

- complex adaptive system* (pp. 230-248). Chichester: Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Ellis, R. (2009). Measuring implicit and explicit knowledge of a second language. In Ellis, R., Loewen, S., Elder, C., Erlam, R., Philp, J. & Reinders, H. (Eds.). *Implicit and explicit knowledge in second language learning, testing and teaching* (pp. 31-64). Bristol: English Language Matters.
- Ennis, S., Rios-Vargas, M. and Albert, N. (2011, May). 2010 Census briefs: The Hispanic population 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>
- Escamilla, K., Mahon, E., Riley-Bernal, H. & Rutledge, D. (2003). High-Stakes Testing, Latinos, and English Language Learners: Lessons from Colorado. *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 27:1, 25-49. doi: 10.1080/15235882.2003.10162590
- Genesee, F. (2002). Portrait of the bilingual child. In Cook, V. (Ed.), *Portraits of the L2 user* (pp. 171-19). [Adobe Digital Editions version]. Retrieved from <http://www.English Language-matters.com>
- Goffman, I. (1974). *Frames analysis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Great Education Colorado (2015). Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.greateducation.org/statistics-faqs/statistics/>
- Griffin, P., Smith, P. & Martin, L. (2003). *Profiles in English as a second language*. Plymouth: Heinemann
- House Bill 12-1238, the READ Act (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/coloradoliteracy/readact/download/hb%201238%20final%20version.pdf>

The English Language Learner Variable

House Bill 14-1298, Financing of Public Schools (2014). Retrieved from

http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2014a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont/6F0F76647E5FEDD87257C360075F28F?Open&file=1298_enr.pdf

Husztai, I., Fábián, M. & Komári, E. (2009). Differences between the processes and outcomes in third graders' learning of English and Ukrainian in Hungarian schools in Beregszász. In Nikolov, M. (Ed.). *Early learning of modern foreign languages: Processes and outcomes* (pp. 166-180). Bristol: English Language Matters

Johnson, M. (2004). *A philosophy of second language acquisition*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Katz, A., Low, P., Stack, J. and Tsang, S. (2004 September). A Study Of Content Area Assessment For English Language Learners. *Office of English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students*, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.arcassociates.org/files/CAELLRpt9-04.pdf>

Kieffer, M., Lesaux, N. & Snow, C. (2008). Promises and pitfalls: Implications of NCLB for identifying, assessing, and educating English language learners. In Sunderman, G. (Ed.), *Holding NCLB accountable: achieving accountability equity, & school reform* (pp. 57-74). California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Lee, J. (2008). Two takes on the impact of NCLB on academic improvement. In Sunderman, G. (Ed.), *Holding NCLB accountable: achieving accountability equity, & school reform* (pp. 57-74). California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Li, M. & Solano-Flores, G. (2008). Examining the dependability of academic

The English Language Learner Variable

- achievement measures for English language learners. *Assessment for effective intervention*, 33:3, pp.1 35-144. doi:10.1177/1534508407313238.
- Lightbown, P. & Spada, N. (2004). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Mahoney, J. (2010). After KKV: The new methodology of qualitative research. *World Politics*, 62, pp. 120-147 doi:10.1017/S0043887109990220
- Meisel, J. (2011). *First and second language acquisition: Parallels and differences*. [Adobe Digital Editions version]. Retrieved from <http://0-lib.myilibrary.com/skyline.ucdenver.edu/Open.aspx?id=329823>
- Migration Policy Institute (2011). Limited English proficient individuals in the United States: number, share, growth, and linguistic diversity. Retrieved from <http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.migrationpolicy.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2Fpublications%2FLEPdatabrief.pdf&ei=QEoAVbziJsaWNoGqgJAM&usg=AFQjCNE5V50LYJfGHvKVvkn1tdD9pm3vzA&bvm=bv.87611401,d.eXY>
- Pinter, A. (2011). *Children learning second languages*. [Adobe Digital Editions version]. doi: 10.1057/9780230302297
- Retta, A. & Brink, C. (2007). *Latino or hispanic panic: Which term do we use?* Retrieved from <http://www.crossculturecommunications.com/latino-hispanic.pdf>
- Rivera, C., Collum, E., Willner, L., & Sia, J. (2006). An analysis of state assessment policies regarding the accommodation of English language learners. In Rivera, C. & Collum, E. (Ed.), *State assessment policy and practice for English language*

The English Language Learner Variable

- learners: A national perspective* (pp.1-149). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Sauter, L. (2012, Winter). Hispanic in everything but its voting patterns: Redistricting in Texas and competing definitions of minority definitions, *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems*: 46(2), p. 251. Retrieve from file:///Users/stephaniedebossu/Desktop/Serials%20Solution s%20360%20Link.webarchive
- Solano-Flores, G. (2008). Who is given tests in what language by whom, when and where? The need for probabilistic views of language in the testing of English language learners. *Education Researcher*, 37:4, 189-199. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30138001>
- Solórzano, R. (2008, June). High Stakes Testing: Issues, Implications, and Remedies for English Language Learners. *Review of Educational Research* , 78(2), pp. 260-329
Published by: [American Educational Research Association](#)
Article Stable URL: <http://0-www.jstor.org.skyline.ucdenver.edu/stable/40071129>
- U. S. Census Bureau (2009). American community survey. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/acs/www/data_documentation/2009_release/
- U.S. Department of Commerce (2013): United States Census Bureau. State and county quickfacts. Retrieved from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/meta/long_RHI725211.htm
- U. S. Department of Education (2004). Fact Sheet: NCLB Provisions Ensure Flexibility and Accountability for Limited English Proficient Students. Retrieved from file:///Users/stephaniedebossu/Desktop/Archived:%20Fact%20Sheet:%20NCLB

The English Language Learner Variable

- %20Provisions%20Ensure%20Flexibility%20and%20Accountability%20for%20Limited%20English%20Prof.webarchive
- Watson, R. (1999). Reading Goffman on interaction. In Smith, G. (Ed.), *Goffman and social organization* (pp.138-155). London: Routledge.
- Wright, W. (2010). English language learners left behind in Arizona: The nullification of accommodations in the intersection of federal and state policies. *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 29:1, 1-29. doi: 10.1080/15235882.2005.10162821
- Young, J., Cho, Y., Ling, G., Cline, F., Steinberg, J. & Stone, E. (2008). Validity and Fairness of State Standards-Based Assessments for English Language Learners, *Educational Assessment*, 13:2-3, 170-192. Doi: 10.1080/10627190802394388